

The Effects of Social Identity Complexity and Ingroup Salience on Group-Based Guilt and  
Intended Reparations

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### Abstract

Research indicates that identification with a social group affects feelings of guilt in response to negative behaviors performed by ingroup members. The present experiment examined how social identity complexity and ingroup salience impacted group-based emotions. It was predicted that individuals with complex social identities would be willing to acknowledge feeling guilty in response to negative behavior performed by ingroup members and thus offer an apology for the behavior than would individuals with less complex social identities. Additionally, it was predicted that making multiple identities salient would increase participants' willingness to admit wrong-doings by ingroup members. Sixty-nine undergraduate students read a news article stating that a group of students wrongfully harmed a professor. All participants completed a questionnaire measuring feelings of group-based guilt and intended reparations to the professor. Although no effects were found for identity salience, the results suggested that social identity complexity can buffer the effects of ingroup identification on intended reparations to wronged groups. Limitations and directions for future research are discussed.

## The Effects of Social Identity Complexity and Ingroup Salience on Group-Based Guilt and Intended Reparations

Group memberships are powerful social influences. They form the basis of our social identities (i.e., aspects of the self that are derived from belonging to a group, Tajfel & Turner, 1986). These identities, in turn, give individuals a way to categorize themselves and others (i.e. Christian, Democrat, American, etc.) and also have the ability to enhance self-esteem. As one might imagine, however, there is a cost to this social identification. Highly identifying with particular groups can lead to the disparagement of outgroup members. There is also the inevitable fact that people with whom we share group memberships have the potential to do terrible things. For example, sports fans at some high profile universities may be faced with the reality that other ingroup members will occasionally riot in the event of a team's loss, destroying property, harming others, and temporarily damaging a university's reputation. It can be difficult for individuals to reconcile being devoted to a group and the group causing harm to others.

We are motivated to maintain positive perceptions of our ingroups (Tajfel & Turner, 1986); therefore, when ingroup members perform harmful actions, we may experience considerable conflict. On one hand, we may defend (or downplay) the negativity of the actions of our fellow group members and thus, maintain a positive image of our group membership (and in turn ourselves). Conversely, individuals may choose to acknowledge the wrongdoing and thus make reparations for the harmed group. Previous research has investigated several factors that encourage individuals to acknowledge the wrongdoings of fellow group members and lead to recommendations of repairs for damage the group caused. However, research has yet to examine the potential effects of social identity complexity on group-based emotions and intended reparations to the outgroup. The present paper examines how social identity and perceptions of

social group memberships affect one's response to negative behaviors performed by ingroup members.

### Group-based guilt

Group-based guilt (Doosje, Branscombe, Spears, & Manstead, 2006) occurs when a group member experiences feelings of guilt on behalf of an ingroup that has unjustly harmed an outgroup. Although there are some individuals who rarely report feelings of guilt on behalf of their fellow ingroup members, Mallett and Swim (2007) found that inequality, responsibility, and justifiability were all individual antecedents of group-based guilt for Whites, men, and women. Research indicates that individuals will report feeling group-based guilt if they perceive that an inequality between the ingroup and the outgroup exists (Branscombe, Doosje, & McGarty, 2002). Mallett and Swim (2007) found that group-based guilt is experienced when ingroup members perceived the benefit they received as important and acknowledged that this benefit is harmful to the outgroup. Also, individuals reported more group-based guilt when they felt responsible for the privileges they received at the outgroup cost (Branscombe, Slugoksi, & Kappen, 2004), but will report less group-based guilt if they feel this privilege was justified (Miron, Branscombe, & Schmitt, 2006). For example, women may agree that they are more likely than men to receive assistance after their car breaks down. If women perceive that this is an important advantage over men, they would be more likely to feel group-based guilt. Alternatively, women would feel less group-based guilt if they do not perceive that this privilege is justified.

Emotional responses are not inconsequential. Feelings of group-based guilt from ingroup members have important consequences for the wronged outgroup members. McGarty et al. (2005) investigated whether non-Indigenous Australians would support their government

apologizing for wrongdoings to the Indigenous populations. It was found that feelings of group-based guilt were positively correlated with support for a government apology, suggesting that feelings of group-based guilt are necessary to spur social justice.

### *Group-based guilt and social identification*

The amount that individuals identify with a group has significant effects on group-based guilt. When individuals highly identify with a group, any threat to the ingroup can be perceived as a threat to themselves. In a case where the group is accused of wrongdoing, highly identified members may feel an urge to defend or justify the harm, lessening any feelings of guilt or support for reparations. Doosje, Branscombe, Spears, and Manstead (1998) found that individuals highly identified with the ingroup felt less guilt in response to ambiguously negative information about their group and were less likely to support financial reparations for the wronged outgroup. However, high identifiers and low identifiers felt equal amounts of guilt when the information could clearly be interpreted as negative. Similarly, research conducted by Hornsey, Oppes, and Svensson (2002) showed that individuals were more willing to accept criticism of their ingroup if the source of the information was an ingroup member. Together, this work suggests that ingroup members need to have a clear indication that their group wrongfully harmed an outgroup to feel group-based guilt or to support reparations to the outgroup. Additionally, ingroup members were perceived as more credible sources of information than outgroup members.

Expanding on these findings, Doosje, Branscombe, Spears, and Manstead (2006) conducted two studies assessing the relationship between social identification and group-based guilt. For the first study, they hypothesized that high identifiers and low identifiers would feel an equal amounts of guilt if the source of negative information about the ingroup came from the

outgroup. However, it was predicted that the high identifiers would question the credibility of the outgroup source and this would result in high identifiers showing less support for financial reparations for the wronged outgroup. It was also hypothesized that high identifiers would feel more group-based guilt than low identifiers when the source came from the ingroup, simply because it would be hard to ignore information coming from the ingroup (Doosje et al., 2006).

Participants were recruited from a Dutch university and first completed an ingroup identification scale, assessing Dutch identification levels. Next, the participants read a one-page summary of the Dutch colonization of Indonesia. The summary contained negative information about the Dutch, stating that during the colonization the Dutch exploited Indonesia's cheap labor force and used up all of their natural resources. Participants in one condition were told that the information was written by a historian from the Netherlands (the ingroup). Participants in a second condition were told that the information was written by a historian from the United States (the outgroup). Participants were asked to report how they felt the Dutch had behaved during the colonization, as well as how guilty they felt about the actions of the Dutch toward the Indonesians. Participants were also asked to report whether or not they felt the Indonesians should be financially compensated for the actions of the Dutch and whether or not they believed the source of the information was credible (Doosje et al., 2006).

The results of the first study supported the hypotheses, showing that high identifiers and low identifiers experienced similar amounts of guilt (moderate levels) when the source was an outgroup member and high identifiers showed a greater tendency to perceive the outgroup source as less credible. Additionally, even though the interaction was not statistically significant, high identifiers tended to show less support for financial reparations. The results also showed that

high identifiers reported more group-based guilt than low identifiers when the source of the negative information came from the ingroup (Doosje et al., 2006).

The second study aimed to more fully explore the finding that high identifiers feel more group-based guilt than low identifiers when the source of negative information comes from the ingroup. To investigate this, Doosje et al. (2006) focused on past reparations to the outgroup, specifically, apologies and financial reparations. They predicted that low identifiers would perceive an apology to the wronged outgroup as an effective way to deal with a negative past and that an apology to the outgroup would cause low identifiers to feel less group-based guilt. However, low identifiers would perceive financial reparations as buying their way out of wrongdoing and this would cause them to feel more group-based guilt. Conversely, Doosje et al. (2006) hypothesized that high identifiers would perceive an apology to the outgroup as an admittance of wrongdoing and that this would cause them to feel more group-based guilt. However, if financial reparations were given to the outgroup, high identifiers would feel less group-based guilt because this would not be interpreted as a confession of wrongdoing (Doosje et al., 2006).

Participants were recruited from the same Dutch university and were asked how highly they identified with the Dutch. Similar to the first study, they read a negative summary of the Dutch colonization of Indonesia. Next, participants were placed in either a *not specified* condition where no information was given as to Dutch reparations after the colonial period, an *apology* condition where it was stated that the Dutch government and the Queen apologized to Indonesia, or a *money* condition where it was stated that the Dutch government offered money to Indonesia. Participants were asked to indicate how positive or negative they perceived the behavior of the Dutch to be during the colonial and also completed a measure of group-based

guilt. Finally all participants were asked whether they recommended financial reparations for the Dutch (Doosje et al., 2006).

The results of the second study showed that high identifiers experienced more group-based guilt when they were under the impression that their group had expressed an apology and less group-based guilt when they were told their group financially compensated the outgroup. Low identifiers felt more group-based guilt when they were under the impression that their group had given financial reparations to the outgroup and felt less group-based guilt when they were told that an apology had been given to the outgroup. When participants were not informed about their group's reparations, high identifiers showed less support for financial reparations. However, when participants were told their group had expressed an apology or had financially compensated the outgroup, high identifiers were more likely to recommend financial reparations (Doosje et al., 2006).

In summary, in addition to inequality, responsibility, and justifiability, group-based guilt is greatly influenced by ingroup identification (Mallett & Swim, 2007). Specifically, individuals who highly identify with a group tend to perceive threats to their ingroup as less credible when they come from an outgroup source, feel more group-based guilt when the source of negative information comes from the ingroup, and perceive an apology as an admittance of wrongdoing resulting in higher group-based guilt (Doosje et al., 2006). The present study aimed to further explore how identification can influence group-based guilt. Before describing the present experiment, literature exploring the effects of social identity complexity and its effect on intergroup attitudes will be reviewed.



### Multiple group memberships and social identity complexity

We are each members of multiple social groups, such as gender, ethnic categories, socio-economic standing, and university affiliations. Yet, research exploring how our multiple social identities and multiple group memberships shape our judgments has been relatively neglected until recently. Roccas and Brewer (2002) proposed that intergroup attitudes are not guided merely by the number of one's multiple group memberships; rather, such attitudes may be influenced by how one's different identities are combined to form the overall inclusiveness of ingroup memberships. Social identity complexity (SIC) refers to the degree of overlap perceived between one's multiple social group memberships. In their model, when the overlap between multiple ingroups is perceived to be high, the individual maintains a relatively simplified identity structure whereby memberships in different groups converge to form a single ingroup identification. For example, a White Republican with a less complex social identity (low SIC) may perceive that essentially all White people are Republicans and all Republicans are White people. By contrast, an individual with a highly complex social identity will perceive less overlap among their ingroup memberships. For example, a White Republican with a more complex social identity (high SIC) may recognize that not all White people are Republicans and not all Republicans are White people.

#### *Social identity complexity formation and antecedents*

A number of factors contribute to the formation of social identity complexity. The following section will discuss how social environments, values, cognitive styles, and situational motivations all play a role in determining whether individuals will have highly complex social identities.

Our social environments have strong influences on our social identities as they typically include where we were educated and/or where we live and work. Roccas and Brewer (2002) suggest that our social environments may contribute to our levels of social identity complexity. We tend to surround ourselves with similar others (Kelley & Evans, 1995) and when socialized in a small, local setting, we tend to perceive our ingroups as similar and highly overlapping, resulting in a simple social identity. By contrast, multicultural or otherwise complex social environments generally contribute to a complex social identity. Typically, to develop a complex social identity, an individual's ingroups must differ from each other, possessing a very small percentage of the same members. Indeed, Miller, Brewer, and Arbuckle (2009) reported that individuals living in more diverse environments were cognizant of the fact that members of their ingroups had the potential of also being members of outgroups. The constant exposure to diversity led to a decreased perception that ingroup memberships overlapped with one another.

Values affect most areas of our lives, representing our goals and what we consider important (Schwartz, 1992). Roccas and Brewer (2002) argue that individuals with low SIC can be distinguished from those with high SIC through the conflicting values they hold. Individuals with low SIC tend to advocate *power* and *achievement* values which emphasize self-interest and social control and *conservatism* values, which stresses avoidance of the unknown or predictable; whereas those with high SIC promote *universalism* and *benevolence* values which emphasize outgroup acceptance as well as *openness to change*, where they have an interest in learning and exploring novel environments.

Miller, Brewer, and Arbuckle (2009) hypothesized that increasing need for cognition would increase one's social identity complexity. Need for cognition refers to the amount with which individuals are involved in and enjoy effortful cognitive activities (Cacioppo, Petty, &

Kao, 1984). For the experimental manipulation, participants were placed in either a *high elaboration* condition, where they were told to think carefully before answering each question, or a *low elaboration* condition, where they were told to answer each question as quickly as possible. The results showed that when elaboration was high and the participants were encouraged to think fully about their different ingroup memberships, overlap scores were low, thus indicating high SIC. When elaboration was low and the participants had little time to respond, overlap scores were high, thus indicating low SIC. Similarly, individuals with high overlap scores were higher in dispositional close-mindedness than individuals with low overlap scores.

In addition to individual differences in cognitive style, Roccas and Brewer (2002) found that social identity complexity is subject to situational motivations. In one study, the researchers examined whether social identity changes in response to ingroup threat. In their study, Israeli students were led to think about either the possibility of Israel being attacked by Iraq if Iraq were to acquire chemical weapons or to think about taking a walk in nature. Results indicated that students led to think about an ingroup threat had lower levels of social identity complexity than the students who read about a nonthreatening situation (Roccas & Brewer, 2002).

#### *Social identity complexity and intergroup relations*

The preliminary research on social identity complexity led to research assessing the relationship between social identity complexity and outgroup tolerance. Because individuals with less complex social identities perceive high overlap among their ingroup memberships, they are likely to perceive that a person who is an outgroup member in one aspect, is an outgroup member in all others. More socially complex individuals on the other hand, perceive that a person could be an ingroup member in one aspect and an outgroup member in another. Thus, Brewer and

Pierce (2005) predicted that individuals with high SIC would be more tolerant of outgroups than those with low SIC. The researchers found that high SIC was associated with greater tolerance and acceptance of outgroups, and support of multicultural diversity and affirmative action. Surprisingly, results indicated that complexity and outgroup tolerance were not related to one's exposure to different ethnicities in one's social environment.

### *Buffering effects of social identity complexity*

With previous research indicating that high SIC is associated with openness to change and tolerance for outgroups, researchers questioned whether social identity complexity could serve as a buffer against an ingroup threat. Gresky, Ten Eyck, Lord, and McIntyre (2005) posited that high social identity complexity should have a buffering effect by helping individuals to confront threats to the status of any single ingroup. Specifically, the researchers examined whether social identity complexity would buffer participants from experiencing stereotype threat. Stereotype threat refers to an individual's fear of confirming a negative stereotype about their social group. This anxiety often impairs one's ability and thus, the target usually confirms the stereotype through unsatisfactory performance (Gresky et al., 2005; Steele & Aronson, 1995). When an individual's ingroup is threatened, he/she is likely to perceive his/her ingroup as less differentiated and revert to a less complex social identity (Roccas & Brewer, 2002). Gresky et al. (2005) postulated that if multiple roles and identities were made salient (and thus social identity complexity would be encouraged), stereotype threat would diminish. The researchers focused their study on the stereotype that women are less proficient at mathematics than men (Smith & White, 2001). Female participants entered the laboratory and were told that the study was being conducted to investigate the stereotype that men perform better than women on math tests. To manipulate identity salience, participants were randomly assigned to one of three experimental

conditions: 1.) self-concept maps with many nodes, 2.) self-concept maps with few nodes and 3.) no self-concept maps. The self-concept maps involved the word *me* surrounded by blank nodes. Participants were asked to complete the nodes with different factors in their lives that they considered important, such as school, family, friends, etc. After drawing a self-concept map, the participants took a 20 minute test with 30 problems sampled from the GRE. The results showed that women who drew self-concept maps with many nodes had more items correct than women who drew maps with few nodes or did not draw maps, suggesting that making multiple identities salient diminished stereotype threat. Based on this research, the present study predicted that making multiple identities salient would lessen a threat to the ingroup, resulting in members feeling more guilt for negative actions against an outgroup member.

Interestingly, Orth and Kahle (2008) found high SIC reduced consumers' susceptibility to normative influence. Normative influence refers to individuals attempting to conform to the social norms and standards set by others. The researchers argued that an individual with high SIC would be less susceptible to the influence of any single ingroup because of the potentially diverging norms prescribed by their other ingroups. Indeed, in a study of consumer wine selection, the researchers found that those with low SIC were more susceptible to normative influence than those with high SIC. Also, those with high SIC possessed more internal values, which refer to values that individuals believe they have the control to fulfill. Internal values include: self-respect, self-fulfillment, and sense of accomplishment. There was no relationship between SIC and external values, which refer to values that individuals believe are out of their control to fulfill. External values include: security, sense of belonging, warm relationships with others, and being well respected. These results suggest that individuals with high SIC place less

importance on conforming to social norms and place more importance on self-respect, self-fulfillment, and sense of accomplishment.

In summary, the previous research on social identity complexity shows that individuals with highly complex social identities are more inclusive and perceive differences between their ingroup memberships. Highly complex social identities are associated with openness to change (Roccas & Brewer, 2002), tolerance for outgroup members (Brewer & Pierce, 2005), less susceptibility to normative influence (Orth & Kahle, 2008), and a greater need for cognition (Miller et al., 2009). Also, making multiple group memberships salient was shown to buffer against stereotype threat (Gresky et al., 2005).

#### *The present study*

The focus of the present study was to extend the current research on social identity complexity by establishing a connection between individuals with high SIC and group-based emotions. Because high SIC is associated with openness to change (Roccas & Brewer, 2002) and tolerance for outgroup members (Brewer & Pierce, 2005), and because making multiple identities salient alleviated ingroup threat (Gresky, Ten Eyck, Lord, & McIntyre, 2005), it was hypothesized that individuals with high SIC and high identification with the ingroup would feel more guilt and be more supportive of reparations after their ingroup harmed an outgroup than individuals with low SIC and high identification with the ingroup.

The study included a sample of college students who were asked to complete two experimental sessions. In the first session, participants completed measures assessing social identity complexity and level of identification with being a student at their university. In the second session, participants completed an identity salience manipulation in which they were asked to list either their multiple social roles or their student activities. All participants then read

a news article indicating that their ingroup (fellow university students) wrongfully harmed an outgroup (professor). Participants then completed a questionnaire measuring feelings of group-based guilt and intended reparations to the professor.

## Method

### *Participants*

Participants included 82 students enrolled in undergraduate psychology courses at the Ohio State University at Marion. The mean age of the participants was 19.77 years. There were 28 males and 41 females included in the final sample. Approximately 83% of the participants were Caucasian, 7% African American, 6% Asian/Pacific Islander, 1% Latino Hispanic, 1% American Indian, and 1% other. Only 69 of the 82 participants completed both experimental sessions, therefore 13 were excluded from analyses.

### *Procedure*

For the first experimental session, participants came to the lab in groups of four and individually completed materials using MediaLab™ software on a personal computer. A Group Elicitation Questionnaire (GEQ) was used to acquire information regarding each participant's group memberships. Demographic information that included a one-item measure of liberalism-conservatism was collected, as well as a social identity complexity overlap measure and a racial/ethnic feeling thermometer measuring affect toward outgroups (Miller, Brewer, & Arbuckle, 2009). Finally, an ingroup identification measure was used and it assessed cognitive, evaluative, and affective identifications with the ingroup (Doosje, Ellemers, & Spears, 1995; Doosje et al., 1998).

For the second experimental session, participants came to the lab in groups of four and completed an identity salience manipulation where they listed either their multiple social roles or

their student activities (Gresky et al., 2005). Next, participants read a news article stating that a professor (outgroup) had been harmed by a group of students (ingroup). Participants then completed a ten-item measure assessing group-based guilt and reparations to the professor (Doosje et al., 2006).

### *Materials*

*Social identity complexity and ingroup identification.* The Group Elicitation Questionnaire (GEQ) included multiple choice questions that determined each participant's group membership information with the following categories: race/ethnicity; religious affiliation; size of home city; region of origin; sports fandom; socio-economic class; and political party. A checklist of groups was provided in each category and participants were asked to indicate which (if any) groups they belonged to. For example, the race/ethnicity category included the question 'Which of these ethnic/racial groups best describes you?' and it was followed by a checklist of racial and ethnic groups (e.g. white, African-American, Asian-American, etc.). On each question participants were also given a 'none of the above/not applicable' option.

Once the participants completed all the questions, they were given a list of all the groups they claimed membership to. The group 'college students' was automatically added to the list. Next, participants were asked to select the four groups (each from a different category) out of their list that were most important to them.

The social identity complexity overlap measure included questions meant to assess participants' perceived overlap in membership between pairs from the four groups they selected from the GEQ. The following instructions were given to the participants regarding this task:



In this part of the experiment, we're interested in your impression of the memberships of the groups you belong to. Some people who belong to the same religious group, for instance, also belong to the same political group. We'll be asking you questions about the extent to which your groups have the same members. For instance, we might ask 'How many people who are <group1> are <group2>?' If all people who are <group1> are also <group2>, then you would say, '10 – All are.' If no people who are <group1> are also <group2>, then you would say, '0 – None are'.

Participants responded to all pairings of their four groups, totaling twelve ratings on a scale from 0 to 10 (0-None are to 5-Half are to 10-All are). Participants also indicated their political ideology on a one-item, 7-point scale, with 1 'very conservative' to 4 'middle of the road' to 7 'very liberal'.

Participants completed a feeling thermometer measuring their affect toward outgroups. They rated on a scale from 0 'Very cold' to 100 'Very warm' how they felt toward white Americans, African-Americans, Asian-Americans, Mexican-Americans, gay and lesbian Americans, Ohio State students, Republicans, and Democrats.

Participants also completed an ingroup identification measure. Responses were given on a 7-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) and indicated the degree to which participants identified with being OSU Students (e.g. 'I identify with other OSU Students' and 'OSU Students are an important group to me').

*Multiple identity salience and ingroup threat.* Participants were asked to list either their multiple social roles or student activities. The directions for the multiple social roles task stated 'Please take the time now to think about the different roles you have in your life and make a list of as many of them as you can below. Ex: Friend, Sister/Brother, Worker, etc.' (see Appendix A). For the student activity task, participants received the following directions, 'Please take the time now to think about all of the different activities you do on campus as a student and list as many as you can below. Ex: Homework, Clubs, Papers, etc.' (see Appendix B). After completing

the identity salience task, participants then read a news article (ingroup threat) that stated a professor from the Ohio State University at Marion had been fired due to unfairly negative student evaluations. This article gave participants the impression that the professor was fired unjustly and that the students who wrote the critiques of the professor did not take the evaluations seriously (see Appendix C).

*Group-based guilt and reparations to the outgroup.* Participants were presented with a seven-item measure that included statements pertaining to the news article and were asked to indicate on a 7-point scale (1-Strongly Disagree to 7-Strongly Agree) how guilty they felt for the actions of the students and whether or not they would be willing to apologize or increase student fees (see Appendix D). Some of the guilt statements included, 'I feel guilty about the negative things the OSU Students have done to the professor' and 'I can easily feel guilty about the bad outcome received by the professor which was brought about by the OSU Students'. An example apology statement was 'I would be willing to personally apologize to the professor for the role the student evaluations played in his termination'. A financial reparation was also included on the measure; it stated 'Student fees should increase by a small percentage to be donated to the professor for his lost wages'.

## Results

*OSU Marion identification scores.* Responses to the six items on the OSU Marion student identification scores were averaged for each participant, producing scores ranging from .83 to 5.83,  $M = 4.16$ ,  $SD = 1.05$ ; Cronbach's  $\alpha = .91$ , indicating that the scale had strong inter-item reliability. For the following statistical analyses, participants were divided into high and low OSU-Marion identifiers based on median split of identification scores ( $Mdn = 4.16$ ).

*Social identity complexity scores.* Responses on the twelve items assessing overlap between group memberships were averaged for each participant, producing scores ranging from 4.00 to 9.00,  $M = 6.37$ ,  $SD = 1.05$ . For the following statistical analyses, participants were divided into 2 groups: Those with highly complex social identities and those with less complex social identity scores based on a median split of their overlap scores ( $Mdn = 6.25$ ).

#### *Dependent variables*

The present study examined four hypotheses: a.) salience of multiple identities would increase feelings of guilt and intended reparations to the outgroup, b.) individuals with high SIC would feel more guilt and be more supportive of reparations, c.) individuals highly identified as OSU Marion students would feel less guilt and be less supportive of reparations, and d.) among those who are highly identified as OSU Marion students social identity complexity would buffer feelings of threat, such that individuals with high SIC *and* high identification with the ingroup would feel more guilt and be more supportive of reparations after their ingroup harmed an outgroup than individuals with low SIC and high identification with the ingroup.

A series of analyses revealed no significant effects using multiple-group salience as a predictor of group-based guilt and intended reparations, all  $F$ 's  $< 2.00$ . Thus, all reported analyses collapse across the salience manipulation. To test the remaining hypotheses, two-way Analyses of Variance (ANOVA) of social identity complexity and ingroup identification were performed separately on feelings of guilt and intended reparations.

*Feelings of guilt.* Responses on the four group-based guilt questions were averaged to produce a group-based guilt score for each participant, with scores ranging from 1.00 to 7.00,  $M = 4.47$ ,  $SD = 1.79$ . Cronbach's  $\alpha = .85$ , indicating that the scale had strong inter-item reliability. A 2 way ANOVA of university identification (high versus low) and social identity complexity

(high versus low) on feelings of group-based guilt revealed no significant effects,  $F's < 1.20$ .

Similar to the Roccas and Brewer (2002) study, it seems that group identity did not affect participants' feelings of group-based guilt.

*Intended reparations.* Participant responses on the three group-based reparation-related questions were averaged to produce an intended reparation score for each participant, with higher scores indicating more favorable attitudes toward reparations. Scores ranged from 1.00 to 7.00,  $M = 2.68$ ,  $SD = 1.45$ . Cronbach's  $\alpha = .60$ , indicating that the scale had reasonable inter-item reliability. A 2 way ANOVA of university identification (high versus low) and social identity complexity (high versus low) on intended reparations revealed a marginal interaction,  $F(1, 62) = 3.51$ ,  $p < .07$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .05$ . For participants who were highly identified as OSU-M students, those who also had complex social identities endorsed greater intended reparations ( $M = 3.02$ ) than were those with less complex social identities ( $M = 2.35$ ). However, for participants who were low in OSU Marion identification, those who had complex social identities were less likely to endorse reparations ( $M = 2.40$ ) than were those with less complex social identities ( $M = 3.08$ ). However, the differences within identification level failed to attain statistical significance,  $p's > .10$ .

Bivariate correlation analyses revealed a positive relationship between feelings of group-based guilt and intended reparations ( $r = .34$ ,  $p < .01$ ), indicating that as feelings of guilt increased, intended reparations increased as well.

To examine the preference for apology over financial reparations, a Preferred Reparations Score was calculated by subtracting participants' willingness to make financial reparations from their willingness to apologize on behalf of their classmates. In general, students preferred apologies over financial reparations, the average difference score was positive  $M = 1.38$ ,  $SD =$

2.06. A 2 way ANOVA of university identification (high versus low) and social identity complexity (high versus low) on preferred reparations revealed a main effect of university identification,  $F(1, 62) = 7.47, p < .01$ . Replicating the results of Doosje et al. (2006), less OSU-Marion identified students were more likely to prefer for the group to offer an apology to the wronged outgroup ( $M = 2.05$ ) than were highly identified OSU students ( $M = .92$ ).

### Discussion

The present study examined the relationship between social identity complexity, ingroup salience, group-based guilt, and reparations to the outgroup. This study contributes to existing research by giving more insight into how individuals feel and behave in reaction to a group threat. Although not all of the research predictions led to statistically significant results, the present experiment yielded important findings. Participants with high identification and high SIC, tended to have greater support for reparations than participants with high identification and low SIC. Specifically, after learning that the ingroup (students) had wrongfully harmed an outgroup (professor), participants who perceived their ingroup memberships as less overlapping and who were highly identified with being a student, were more willing to give the wronged professor reparations than participants who perceived their ingroup memberships as highly overlapping and who were highly identified with being a student. This finding suggests that individuals who have a complex social identity are not only more tolerant of outgroup members (Brewer & Pierce, 2005), but they may have the capability of acknowledging wrongdoing and supporting repairs to any damage done to outgroup members. Also, consistent with the previous research of Doosje et al. (2006), participants who were less identified with being OSU Marion students were more supportive of an apology to the wronged outgroup than participants who were highly identified with being OSU Marion students. This supports the notion that individuals

who are low identifiers tend to perceive an apology as a more appropriate way of dealing with past wrongdoing.

Contrary to predictions, making multiple identities salient had no significant effects on group-based guilt and reparations to the outgroup. One reason for this could have been the ordering of the measures. Gresky et al. (2005) introduced the salience manipulation after the stereotype threat, whereas we introduced the salience manipulation before our threat, and this could have produced different results. The threatened ingroup could have been salient instead and theoretically, it may have affected the outcome. Also, student identity may not have been strong enough for this study. Specifically, the average age of participants were 19 years, which suggests they had probably only been college students at the Marion campus for one year or even less, thus their identity as a student would have been relatively weak compared to identities they had held for a longer period of time. An American, for example, would be a much stronger identity because being an American is a part of one's identity their entire life.

Additionally, social identity complexity had no effect on group-based guilt. One potential explanation is that college aged participants have not yet completed the formation of their social identities. Brewer and Pierce (2005) suggested that college aged students may not have fully developed social identities and that it may be more appropriate to test social identity complexity on adults who are beyond college. College aged students have only been adults a short time and are in a period of transition in their lives. They are still in a process of exploring their social identities. This factor may have had an effect on the results. Another explanation, supporting previous suggestions of Roccas and Brewer (2002), is that in the event of an ingroup threat, individuals temporarily revert to a simple social identity. They will perceive their ingroup memberships as highly overlapping during the threat to the ingroup. This also supports previous

research by Doosje et al. (2006), stating that ingroup identification is one the main predictors of group-based guilt.

### *Limitations and future directions*

One of the main limitations of this study was that the sample was too small. Approximately 13 participants were excluded from analyses because they were unable to participate in both experimental sessions. This project was too ambitious for such a small, limited sample. The results may have seen more movement in the direction of our hypotheses if there had been a larger sample, with a wider range in participant age. Also, the area in which we tested participants is known for being a smaller county. Future research would fare better to include samples from multiple cities across the state, small and large, testing the measures across various social classes for the results to be more generalizeable.

The purpose of this study was to determine whether group-based guilt was dependent solely on how much an individual identifies with a group, or if an individual's social identity complexity could act as a buffer, making them feel guilt regardless of the amount of group identification. We hoped to have similar findings to Gresky et al. (2005) that showed social identity complexity had the ability to combat stereotype threat. The results showed that reminding individuals of their multiple group memberships had no effect on ingroup threat and that ingroup identification remained the primary predictor of group-based guilt. It was found, however, that individuals with high SIC were more likely to recommend reparations for the harmed outgroup. Future research should explore this further, possibly by using a stronger identity (i.e. American) and focusing on differences in the types of reparations given to the outgroup and the differences in past, present, and future reparations to the outgroup. This study was the first to examine the effects of social identity complexity on group-based guilt and

reparations to the outgroup. This initial investigation highlights the importance of social identity complexity because it distinguishes highly identified group members who were willing to admit wrongdoing from their counterparts. Moreover, identifying individuals who are greatly attached to their ingroups, who also have the ability to admit when their groups have done harm, will move research further in the direction of finding ways to improve group relations.



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## Appendix A

**Multiple Roles**

Please take the time now to think about the different roles you have in your life and make a list of as many of them as you can below. Ex: Friend, Sister/Brother, Worker, etc. You will have 3 minutes to complete this task.

## Appendix B

**Student Roles**

Please take the time now to think about all of the different activities you do on campus as a student and list as many as you can below. Ex: Homework, Clubs, Papers, etc. You will have 3 minutes to complete this task.

## Appendix C

**Marion, OH** - The recent firing of a professor (name withheld by request) at the Ohio State University at Marion has now been linked to poor student evaluations. The firing comes as a shock to many as the professor was well-known for his dedication to his students and his work with several local charities. A university spokesperson released the following statement:

*“At the end of every quarter, students enrolled in classes are given the opportunity to evaluate their professors on the quality of instruction and the curriculum. It’s one of several means used to maintain our high standards.”*

OSU administrators maintain that student comments are an essential part of professor evaluations and that administrators must take seriously critiques by students— especially when the student response is extremely unfavorable. The student comments that triggered the professor’s termination were indeed unfavorable, indicating that the professor was “mean,” “disinterested in teaching,” “looked at female students in inappropriate ways,” “the worst professor ever” and “I hated him!”

The fired professor has asked for an investigation into the poor evaluations. Students interviewed by this paper later claimed they rated the professor poorly as a “joke” because many of them found the class to be “boring.” Additionally, at least two students admitted that they wrote negative comments as so-called “grade revenge.”

“We didn’t intend for him to get fired,” one student said who asked for her name to be withheld. “Like all students, we just wanted to get back at him for giving out so many low grades.” A second student added, “No big loss. One less boring professor.” A current faculty member at the university stated “Many students don’t realize that these evaluations are taken seriously by OSU and are unaware that our jobs depend on them.” Student evaluations have been a part of OSU’s policy for over ten years. Reports of “grade revenge” or retaliation for poor grades have been on the rise in the past few years.

## Appendix D

**Response Questionnaire**

**Instructions:** Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the statements below based on the story you just read.

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree

1. I feel guilty about the negative things the OSU Students have done to the professor. \_\_\_\_\_
2. I feel regret for the harmful actions of the OSU Students toward the professor. \_\_\_\_\_
3. I can easily feel guilty about the bad outcome received by the professor which was brought about by the OSU Students. \_\_\_\_\_
4. I do not feel guilt about the negative things the OSU Students have done to the professor. \_\_\_\_\_
5. I think the OSU Students who wrote the negative evaluations should apologize to the professor for what was done. \_\_\_\_\_
6. I think the OSU Student body (as a whole) should apologize to the professor for what was done. \_\_\_\_\_
7. I would be willing to personally apologize to the professor for the role the student evaluations played in his termination. \_\_\_\_\_

8. Student fees should increase by a small percentage to be donated to the professor for his lost wages. \_\_\_\_\_
9. I do not think the OSU Students who wrote the negative evaluations should apologize to the professor for what was done. \_\_\_\_\_
10. Student evaluations should be discontinued. \_\_\_\_\_